



GEAUGA PUBLIC HEALTH

Promoting and Protecting Community Health

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September 22, 2021

To: Geauga County Superintendents

Re: Quarantine & Isolation in Schools

The ultimate goal is for our students and teachers to be able to stay in an in-person education environment, and still minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The following guidelines have been created in regards to COVID-19 exposures and infections due to the virus's following characteristics that we have learned thus far:

1. This is an infection that is primarily spread by respiratory droplets.
2. Not everyone infected with the virus will have symptoms.
3. A person infected with COVID-19 is spreading the virus 2 -3 days before symptoms start.
4. Most people start with symptoms approximately 3 - 5 days after exposure, but it can be up to 14 days.
5. Having a COVID-19 infection depends on the amount of COVID-19 viral particles a person inhales. One of the reason delta variant is so contagious is because there are more viral particles in a person's respiratory droplets than in previous variants.
6. A person with a COVID-19 infection is spreading viral particles for an average of 10 days from the start of symptoms. However, if they continue to have symptoms at the 10 day mark, they are considered contagious until they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and their condition is improving.
7. If a person has been vaccinated, they are less likely to become severely ill and need to be hospitalized.
8. Current data shows vaccinated and unvaccinated people are spreading the virus if infected with the delta variant. Future variants could pose similar and/or additional problems.

DEFINITIONS:

Symptomatic: Typical COVID-19 symptoms include, but are not limited to - New onset cough with or without shortness of breath, nasal congestion or runny nose, sore throat, body aches and chills, fever over 100.4 F, vomiting/diarrhea.

Close contact in the school setting: Having been closer than 3 feet, for at least 15 minutes total time within 24 hours.

Recommendations to Quarantine/Isolate

Isolation Protocol (Symptomatic or a positive test)

If a student experiencing symptoms that could be due to a COVID-19 infection, the student should stay home from school and seek medical attention for possible COVID-19 testing and directions for care.

If a student has tested positive for COVID-19 and is having symptoms, the student should stay isolated from others for 10 days following onset of symptoms. If the student is asymptomatic but has tested positive, the student should stay isolated from others for 10 days following the date of the test.

If a student has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and then tests positive, they should follow isolation protocol.

If a student, who is asymptomatic AND has not been a close contact, tests positive with an at home rapid test that does not come with a tele-health visit, we recommend reaching out to your doctor or other test providers to get an additional test.

Quarantine Protocol (Exposure)

In the classroom setting that requires masking:

If a student is notified they have been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 virus, as long as the masks were worn by both people the duration of the exposure, they can continue to attend school if they are closely monitoring for symptoms, and convert to isolation protocol if they start to experience any symptoms, and are vigilant about mask wearing for the 14 days following exposure. If the student or parent feels the mask wearing cannot be done reliably, then they should remain at home.

In the classroom setting that does not require masking:

If a student is determined to be a close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 virus or a presumed positive case, they need to stay home for 14 days, monitoring for symptoms. If symptoms start, they would then convert to isolation protocol. If they remain asymptomatic, they have the option to provide proof of a negative COVID test that was done from a reliable source and after the 5th day from the last day of exposure. At that time, they could return to school, keeping vigilant about mask wearing and monitoring for symptoms for the rest of the quarantine period.

Geauga Public Health and the School Districts rely on both parents and students taking personal responsibility for disclosing illness, quarantining/isolation as necessary, and notifying appropriate persons regarding symptoms that might arise.

These are recommendations and schools should consult with their own legal counsel.